

Arabic Keyboard on macOS

This document provides instructions on giving you:

1. the ability to type easily type in Arabic using English phonetic letter equivalents without you having to learn the standard Arabic typewriter layout, as well as
2. the ability to type Arabic transliteration using any of the documented Arabic Romanization standards such as the [ALA-LC Library of Congress standard](#).

Installing the Arabic Phonetic Keyboard

The Arabic Phonetic Keyboard comes packaged with macOS. To further enhance the phonetic typing experience for composing Islamic literature, I have created a custom keyboard that adds additional features missing in the default keyboard. The instructions to install either keyboard are very similar and differences will be called out as needed.

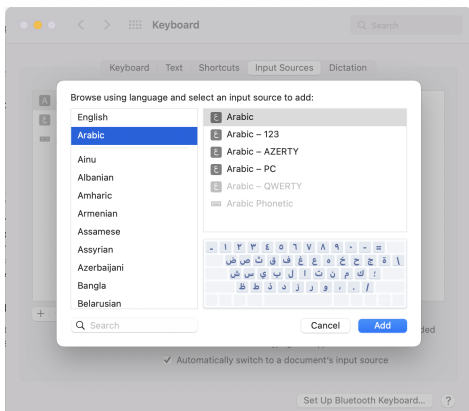
Install Adnan's Custom Phonetic Keyboard (Optional)

Skip this sub-section if you do not want to install or use my custom keyboard. To proceed and install this custom keyboard layout:

1. Download Adnan's custom 'Arabic Phonetic Keyboard' from the link: <https://archive.org/details/arabic-phonetic-keyboard-macos>, and download the ZIP version.
2. Uncompress (extract) the ZIP file by double-clicking it and revealing the keyboard layout file called "Adnan's Arabic Phonetic.bundle".
3. Copy or move this file to your mac's "/Library/Keyboard Layouts" folder.

Install the Keyboard Layout

The default phonetic keyboard for MacOS is called "Arabic - QWERTY". To install this keyboard layout:



1. Open System Preferences > Keyboard.
2. Select Input Sources.
3. Click the [+] button to add a new Input Source (keyboard layout).
4. Under the category of the Arabic language, select "**Arabic - QWERTY**".
5. Optionally if you've installed my custom keyboard, select "**Arabic Phonetic Keyboard**".

6. Click the Add button.

You should now be able to switch between different keyboard layouts by pressing the *Fn* key or the *Globe* key on your mac keyboard or using the shortcut *Option-Control-Space* to cycle through the installed keyboard layouts.

macOS's "Arabic - QWERTY" Keyboard Layout



Adnan’s “Arabic Phonetic Keyboard” Layout



Comparing the Two Layouts

Following are the differences in each keys row of the keyboard layout starting from the number keys row:

Key	Adnan’s Arabic Phonetic	macOS Arabic - QWERTY
` ~	Normal: Extender / Taṭwīl Shift: Upper Dagger Alif Option: Lower Dagger Alif Shift-Option: Less-Than Sign	Normal: Extender / Taṭwīl Shift: Extender / Taṭwīl Option: Greater-Than Sign Shift-Option: Less-Than Sign
3 #	Normal: Number Three Shift: Alif w/ Hamzah Above Option: Number Symbol Shift-Option: Alif w/ Hamzah Before	Normal: Number Three Shift: Alif w/ Hamzah Above Option: Number Symbol Shift-Option: Number Symbol

	To be documented... it's tedious to do this... I may come around to complete this later. Hopefully, you can play around and figure it out by trying Shift, Option, and Shift-Option for each key.	
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Installing the Transliteration Keyboard

macOS comes packaged with a keyboard that helps you type the Latin alphabet with diacritics (dots below, lines above, etc.). This keyboard is called the “[ABC - Extended](#)” keyboard layout. Install the keyboard using the same instructions as above. It is found in the English language category.

This keyboard uses the concept of “dead keys” to create diacritical marks. For the ALA-LC standard, you only need to know three dead keys:

- **Option-a** followed by a letter: This adds the line on top of the letter, used for long vowels in Arabic ALA-LC
- **Option-x** followed by a letter: This adds a dot below the letter
- **Option-e** followed by a letter: This adds an accent above the is only used for the Alif Maksūrah

💡 **TIP:** I do not use the “ABC” keyboard layout which is the default for macOS. I have removed it from my out-of-box keyboard layout options. Instead, my default English typing keyboard is this “ABC - Extended” keyboard. I did this so I only have to switch between two keyboard layouts: ABC - Extended, and the Arabic Phonetic.

Once installed, use the following transliteration chart to type the Romanized Arabic character according to the ALA-LC standard. The following table only shows keyboard shortcuts for special letters.

Arabic Letter	ALA-LC Letter	Shortcut	Example
ع	’	Custom Shortcut or Single Quote	ba’s باس
ا	ā	Option-a a	Allāh الله
ي	ī	Option-i i	banī بنى

ح	ḥ	Option-x h	ḥamd حَمْد
ص	ṣ	Option-x s	al-ṣamad الصَّمَد
ض	ḍ	Option-x d	ḍuḥá ضُحَى
ط	ṭ	Option-x t	ṭabaq طَبَق
ظ	ẓ	Option-x z	ẓulm ظُلْم
ع	‘	Custom Shortcut or Backquote	‘aynayn عَيْنَيْن
ي	ī	Option+x i	rahīm رَحِيم

Custom Shortcuts for ‘Ayn and Hamzah

Typing the ALA-LC standard version of the letters ‘ayn and hamzah you will have to use text replacements in macOS. [Click here](#) for instructions on how to add text replacements in macOS. Copy and paste the left and right half-circles in the transliteration chart above for use in your text replacements.

Note that, Google Docs does not honor macOS custom shortcuts. Google Docs has its own text replacements under Tools > Preferences.

Happy Arabic'ing